

Reasons why Vice ought to be Punish'd,
but is not:
1608/1503.

I N A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at
Maidston in Kent,
At the *ASSIZES* holden
there before
Mr. Justice *TRACY*,
March the 17th. 1708.

Published at the Desire of the Gentlemen
of the Grand Jury.

By JOHN JOHNSON, M. A.
Vicar of Cranbrook in the said County.

L O N D O N:
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To the Right Worshipful
Stephen Stringer, Esq;
High Sheriff
OF THE
County of *Kent* ;

As also to
Sir MARTIN LUMLEY, Bart.

And the rest of the
Gentlemen of the Grand Inquest for
the *Lent ASSIZES. 1707.*

This Sermon is most humbly De-
dicated, by

Their most Humble, and

Obedient Servant,

John Johnson.



P S A L M X C I V . 16.

Who will rise up with me against the wicked: or who will take my part against the evil doers?

THO there be no Title to this Psalm, in the *Hebrew*, yet he that reads it with Attention, will easily be convinc'd, that it was Compos'd by some Pious Soul, inspir'd with a just Zeal for the Glory of GOD, and his Laws, during the time that the People of *Israell* were Oppress'd, and their Judicatures invaded by the *Affyrians*, or some other *Heathen* Conquerors, which gave occasion to that devout Passion which he expresses in the first Words of the Psalm. O *Lord God*, to whom *Vengeance* belongeth, thou *God* to whom *Vengeance* belongeth, shew thy self: Arise, thou *Judge* of the Earth, and reward the *Proud* after their deserving. How long shall all *Wicked-doers* speak so disdainfully, and make such proud boasting? They smite down thy People, O *Lord*, and trouble thine *Heritage*. They slay the *Widow* and *Stranger*, and put the *Fatherless* to death. For it can scarce be suppos'd, that these Words could be meant of any Governors, but such as were professedly Infidels. I wish I could say, that the Words of my Text too were such as could not be apply'd to any *People*, but such as were Strangers to the True GOD, and his

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Holy Word, and that there were no occasion, even in a Christian Country, to make the same Complaint, that the *Psalmist* here does in a Nation, that was then over-run with Ignorant Barbarians, viz. *Who will rise up with me against the Wicked?* In Discoursing further on these Words, I shall

I. Shew that it should be the Care and Study of all Honest Men, as it was the *Psalmist's*, to Reform others, as well as themselves.

II. And that particularly, by putting Laws against Vice in Execution.

III. The great Discouragement they meet with in this Excellent Work, and that in the scarcity of those, who will joyn with them in it.

IV. I shall consider what are the true Reasons of Mens backwardness in this Particular.

I. That it should be the Care and Study of all Honest Men to Reform others, as well as themselves. It ought to be their first Business to Reform what is amiss at Home, before they pretend to be Instruments in Reducing others. It would turn the Stomach even of a *Pharisee*, that was not harden'd in his Hypocrisy, to see a Man with *Jebl*, proclaim his own *Zeal for the Lord of Hosts*, and declaim against the Vices of his Neighbours, while he himself is guilty of the



the same, or, as great Crimes, as those that he punishes, or insults in other Men. *How* or with Mat. VII. what face (says our L O R D, and Master) *Wilt* 4.
thou say to thy Brother, let me pull out the mote, that is in thine eye, and behold a beam is in thine own eye? And thinkest thou, O Man, says St. Paul, Rom. II. which condemnest them that do such things, and ^{3.} do'st the same, that thou shalt escape the just Judg-
ment of G O D? If even an Alexander, or any one that is really as great as he was in his own conceit shall, after the Ravages that he has himself been guilty of, punish an inferiour sort of Pyrate, or Free-boter, he shall be sure to hear of it again; and if no body else, yet his own Conscience will reprove him.

But when a Man has once in earnest declared against Vice, he will certainly hate, and loath it in others, as well as in himself. And 'tis very hard indeed, if Men that do indulge themselves in Evil habits, will not allow them, who are hearty Converts to Virtue, to have as great a Zeal, and Affection for it, as they themselves have for their Vices. If the Thief, and the Debauchee use so much Art and Contrivance, to draw others in to be sharers with them in their Guilt, why should they wonder, if those who are of a contrary Party be as industrious to allure, or terrifie Men, in order if possible to bring them over to their own side? And let them further consider, which act most Rationally, they that employ their Care, and Courage to make Men Sober, and Just, or they that would drink them out of their Wits, deprive them of their Innocency, and engage them.

them in such Courses, as tend at once to their Temporal and Eternal Ruin? Who may best Justifie themselves, they that do their Endeavour to bring Men to a sense of the Being, and Power, and Justice of G O D, and of the necessity of Obeying him, or they that use all their Wit, and Power in raising, or enflaming a Rebellion against their Maker? It is natural for all Men to desire to make others Proselytes to their own Opinions, and Practices: And it would be very odd indeed, if in an Age, when a very great part of Mankind seem to use their greatest application for Improvements, and new Discoveries in Vice, they who have with Heart and Good-will devoted themselves to the service of the Holy J E S U S, should not look upon themselves as obliged to exert their greatest power, their most vigorous efforts for the promoting substantial Virtue, and running down Impiety and Prophaneness by all honest, and proper Methods. And they who are in their Hearts Christians, but yet have a coldness, and indifference as to the great Business I am now speaking of, ought to consider, how the Bigotted Atheists, and the Zealous Debauchee upbraid their Sloth, and Supineness. See how these Miserable Wretches be-labour their Wits, and rack their Inventions to find out false Colours, and Sophistries, wherewith to plead the Cause of Sin, to disguise its monstrous Nature, thereby to inveigle themselves and others to take down the deadly Dose with less reluctance. They are not ashamed to turn Advocates for the most loathsom Cause, and to

to be Agents for the most hideous and mischievous Tyrant in the World : Whilst we, who call ourselves Christians, have little or no Concern for the most Heavenly and Divine Cause, the Greatest as well as the Best of Masters ; and can stand by like Neuters, and hear, and see those things said, and done, which are direct Treason against the King of Heaven, and not only a Violation, but a Defiance of his most Holy Laws : And he who has a real Love and Regard for them, cannot without great inward Resentment, be Witness to any thing of this sort, as knowing that it is not only our Duty to be True and Faithful in our Minds to the Master and Cause which we have espous'd, but to shew it by Acting for them with all the Vigor we are able : And that, (when all fair Means have been us'd in vain),

II. Particularly, by putting the Laws against Vice in execution. That is the chief Busines of this Time and Place, and 'twas chiefly for this End, that the Sword was intrusted with the Civil Magistrate : *For he is the Minister of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath on him that doth Evil.*

And that they who are guilty of Murder, Rom. XIII. Felony, Theft, and the like, should suffer for it according to the Laws of the Land, will, I suppose, be allow'd by all to be fit, and reasonable. Because the chief End of all Civil Society, or Government is to secure Men so far as is possible, in the quiet Enjoyment of their Lives and

and Liberties, and Properties, so long as they live peaceably under it.

But if Murderers and Robbers are permitted to live, and if Men by impunity are encourag'd to do Mischief to their Fellow-Subje&cts, then the main End of Humane Government is defeated.

But it may perhaps be doubted by some, whether the Civil Magistrate ought to unsheathe his Sword against those Crimes, which tho' they are very great, yet are not so directly against Civil Government, and the Peace of the World, viz. Blasphemies, Profaneness, and all gross Immorality. But these Men ought to Consider :

1. That there are some Crimes, which tho' they do not so directly affect the Lives, Estates, and Liberties of other Men, yet do very much affect the very Being of Civil Government, and indeed strike at the very Foundations of it, as profest Atheism, or the Denial of Divine Providence. And he that declares for such Opinions as these, and especially, if he endeavour to make Proselytes to them, does the greatest Act of Hostility against the Civil Power. By this he declares, that he ceases to be a Subject to his Prince, deprives the Government of as many other Subjects, as he brings over to his wicked Tenets. For such Men can no more be true Subjects to the Queen, than those Foreigners, whom Business, or Curiosity has brought into our Country, or whom the Fate of War has made Prisoners here ; they will obey no longer, than 'tis for their Interest ; they may indeed comply

ply for Wrath, but they cannot be obedient for Conscience sake. And if he be thought worthy of Death, who by wilfull Murder is occasion of the loss of one Subject, what does he deserve, who by avowing, and maintaining such Principles endeavours to poyson, and seduce from their Allegiance (if it were possible) the whole Nation? Who takes away so far as in him lies, those powerful Restraints which the Belief of a Just G O D, and of future Rewards and Punishments do lay upon the Consciences of Men? And by this means effaces all difference between Good and Evil, lays all in common, turns every Man's Hand against his Brother, and exposes every Man's Life to the mercy of his Neighbour, if he think he can deprive him of it with security to avoid Punishment in this World.

And those Men, who are got into *the Scorne's Chair*, who pour Contempt on every Thing that is Sacred, and make G O D, and Religion the Subject of their Mirth and Raillery, do plainly shew, what lurks within. Blasphemous, and Profane Discourse are infallible Symptoms of an Unbelieving Heart. And when such sort of Conversation grows Fashionable, and Men that use it, are call'd Wits, no wonder, if they, who much affect to be thought Agreeable Company, take it up, and by allowing themselves such sort of Discourse, by degrees bring themselves to think as they talk, and to have very little and indifferent Thoughts of those most Holy Things, which they speak of in so light a manner. And there is great reason to fear, that if this Humour prevail, as it has done of late, Religion

will by degrees lose all its Force and Authority : And what will the Consequence of that be, but the disbanding all Government and Civil Society ?

The Dependence of Government on Religion is so very visible, that some Men, who wou'd be thought to know the Causes of all Things, wou'd persuade us, that it is the Invention of some Crafty Politicians, to keep the People in Awe, and terrify 'em into a compliance with their Laws, and Impositions. If this be meant of the Christian Religion, nothing can be more apparently false. For Christianity is so far from being the effect of Humane Policy, that if all the Emperors, Princes, and States-men in the World, could at first have prevented its Settlement and Growth, they wou'd certainly have done it. For Three hundred Years, and more, it was Persecuted by all the Power of *Rome* and *Perfia*, of *Jew* and *Gentile*; and Politicians were so far from being the Authors of it, that on the contrary, they us'd all their Cunning and Malice to nip it in the Bud, and smother it in the Cradle, if we may believe not only our own Histories, but those of the very Heathen.

Not but that the Christian Religion truly understood, and practised is undoubtedly the best support in the World to humane Government; but they who were then in Power were not sensible of it: for *the Prince of this World*, the sworn Enemy of **CHRIST JESUS** and his Religion *had blinded their Eyes*. And since now by the Experience of so many Ages it appears, that the Gospel is not only fitted
for

for the saving of Mens Souls in another Life, but for keeping them in Peace, and Subjection in this, that Man certainly gives the most fatal Blow to Civil Government, who endeavours to take away or weaken the strongest Pillar on which it leans, and therefore ought to be treated as a publick Pest, as an Enemy to the Peace, and stability of Civil Government.

2. There is another Crime of which 'tis hard to say whether it be more injurious, and contradictory to GOD and Religion, or to Humane Laws, and Government, I mean Wilful Perjury, and that,

1. In affirming that upon Oath, which we know to be false, or do not know to be true. A false *Oath* as well as a true does indeed in Humane Judicatures, which cannot look into the breasts of Men, put *an end to Strife* and Disputes, but such an end as is contrary to Reason, and Justice, and Common Right. He that allows himself in this, is capable of doing so much mischief, has the Lives, and Rights of others so much at his discretion, and is guilty of so open an affront against G O D, and all that is good; that if he be discovered, he can scarce be punish'd too severely: And in this Case if any, that Law of Retaliation might in Humane prudence be justified, *viz.* that *If a False Witness rise up, and Deut. testify that which is wrong, then shall ye do to him, XIX. 16, as he thought to have done unto his Brother.* No ^{19.} Mercy is due to such a Wretch, for it is immediately added, *Thine Eyes shall not pity him.*

2. Not is the Crime of those less, who promise any thing upon Oath, and afterwards

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knowingly, and wilfully neglect the performance of it. And this is the Case of Corrupt Jury-Men, in whom the Law reposes a very great Trust indeed, and obliges them by the solemnity of an Oath faithfully to discharge it: But if notwithstanding this they pervert Justice and Judgment, tho' they may, and often do escape punishment, and even censure in this Life; yet let them remember, that they must answer for it at a higher Tribunal, where no arts or palliations will stand in any stead.

They are likewise guilty of this High Crime who having sworn Allegiance to their Sovereigns, do yet *break the Yoke, and burst the Bond*: And this is in an especial manner to be applyed to those, who seem to take this Oath on purpose to qualify themselves to do the greater mischief by breaking of it. This is a Sin, which in a loud manner cries for Vengeance from our Gods on Earth, as well as from the most High.

And it ought not to pass without observation, that swearing in our common discourse is a Natural Introduction to this Sin of Perjury. For it can scarce be thought that that Man will have a due regard to the sacredness of an Oath, when Administred by Authority, who makes it his practice to Swear to the Truth of every thing he speaks, right, or wrong. If therefore it be for the security of Justice, and civil Obedience, that Men should make Conscience of an Oath, then surely it greatly concerns us to do all that in us lies to put the Laws in Execution against common Swearers: Lest by degrees it come to pass, if it be not so in some measure already,

already, that Men make no more of Forswearing themselves before the Magistrate, than they do amongst their Comrades.

3. And indeed I think, that both as we are Christians, and Subjects, we cannot if we will give our selves leave to think, but concur in Judgment with Her Majesty, and the Wisdom of the Nation, who by their Laws, and Proclamations admonish us, that all manner of Lewdness, and Debauchery ought to be discouraged, and punished, if we have any regard, not only to the Honour of G O D, and Religion, but to the Publick Peace, and Safety of the Nation.

1. Habitual Intemperance and Sensuality do by degrees harden the Heart, and deaden all sense of Religion in the Minds of Men, and when this is once done, all the most Sacred Obligations they are under to G O D, and their Superiors, are soon forgotten. Houses of Debauchery, and Drunken-Clubs are the great Seminaries of Atheism and Irreligion, and consequently one great occasion of all the Mischiefs that can light upon the Kingdom.

2. Riot and Lewdness render Men unfit for the Service of Church and State, turn Men into perfect Drones, good for nothing but to live on the Stock, that has been gathered by others: And so long as Excess, and Uncleanliness are not more effectually suppress'd, 'tis reasonably to be expected, that the Poor should daily increase upon us.

3. 'Tis Vice that drives Men to seek supplies from

from Theft, and Rapine, and to all those Villanies, that are the last refuge of a profuse Life.

4. If Lewdness and Debauchery are permitted to grow upon us, as they have done, who knows, but our Children, those on whom under GOD we have placed our Hopes, and Affections, may at last be involved in the Guilt, and the fatal Effects of it? And I am persuaded, that even they who are least of all sensible of the monstrousness of these Sins, yet could not without great resentment, and concern be witness to the publick shame, the fatal miscarriage of their own Flesh and Blood, and would look upon it at least as a Blot to their Families to have a Son, or Daughter brought to that which is very frequently the end of a Lewd, and Vicious Life.

5. And as to those, who are really under the Power of Religion, that believe, and know the *Tenor of the L O R D*, it can't be thought, that they can with any manner of easiness see his Authority vilified, his Laws despised, and his Indignation provoked: they will endeavour, as well as pray, that GOD's Name may be honoured, his Kingdom come, his Will be done.

6. Nay I will add, that all who love the pleasure, the innocent and most manly pleasure of Conversation, if they have any regard to their Credit, and are not absolutely fallen out with Religion, ought to do their part toward the banishing of every thing, that is contrary to good Manners and Sobriety, out of their Company. For through the looseness of too many the very name of Company keeping is grown a Reproach

Reproach among serious People. And I can see no way, whereby it can recover its Reputation, except they, who are of a sociable Temper, and yet retain some respect to Virtue, will do their best Endeavours to regulate the Frolicks, and check the extravagant Sallies of those, who know not how to be merry, but by being profane, or lewd.

7. We of the Church of *England* ought particularly to shew our Zeal upon this Occasion; for

1. The Doctrine of the Church is the most Essential Part of its Constitution, the Rites Canons and Rubricks ought by no means to be disobey'd, or contemptuously neglected; but still we ought to be most careful of her Doctrine; because we have receiv'd this expressly from C H R I S T J E S U S, and consequently from G O D himself. And as we justly think, that this Doctrine is Profest and Preach'd as purely in the Church of *England*, if noe more so, than any where else: So we oughe to pray, and endeavour that it may be practisled, as purely as it is taught. Methinks we ought to make it appear, that *our Faith is not vain, nor our Preaching altogether in vain*, as certainly it is, if there be no Fruits, and Effects of it in our Lives and Conversations. And sure nothing can look more absurd and awkard, than for a Man to pretend to a flaming Zeal for the Church, but to have none at all for Religion; that is, for sincere Faith, and Holiness of Life, which is undoubtedly the truest Ornament, and Glory of any Church, or Profession; no Zeal against Vice, and Debauchery, which is the greatest

greatest Shame and Scandal that any Man, or Body of Men can lie under.

2. We ought all to be aware, that the most dangerous Sect of Men amongst us at present are the Atheists, and Deists (I mean those, who, if they do believe a GOD, yet it must be such a One as fits their Humour, a Deity without Justice, or Goodness, who neither rewards nor punishes; and who, tho' they pretend to Morality, seem to mean nothing by it but a smooth Deportment, or good Breeding, or who if they believe any Sin, to be damnable, yet not Lewdness, or Debauchery) those I say, I believe at present to be the most formidable Adversaries of our Church. Others would set aside her Government, and her Forms of Worship; but these aim at Christianity it self, they would persuade us not only out of our Common-Prayer-Book, but our Bible too, and even out of our Christian Names. These are Men that mingle, and associate with all Parties, and for Interest sake can seem to be of any Church and take up any Denomination. Serious Discourse or Argument, is what they do not affect, their Cause will not bear it. Their way of making Converts is by a frothy Jest, a smart Repartee, a loud Laugh at any thing that is Good, or Sacred. By these they catch the unwary, the frolicksom, the debauched Part of Mankind. These are very numerous, and are all in Danger of this Infection, except some Remedy can be found out, and seasonably apply'd, whereby to restrain that unbounded Licentiousness of Conversation, which is now grown

so fashionable amongst us: And if we have any Regard for that Holy Religion, which the Son of G O D came down from Heaven to teach us, we cannot better shew it, than by putting in Execution, those Laws which we already have, and praying to G O D that he would put it into the Hearts of our Legislators to make more. Clubs and Riotous Cabals are the Schools, where such Principles, if I may so call them, are instilled into the Minds of our heedless Youth, and where they learn to despise Religion, before they know it: And if a timely stop be not put to these Attempts, there is great Reason to fear, that in time we shall have no Church at all, or a Church without any Religion.

3. This is the most just Demand, that the Dissenters ever made upon the Church, *viz.* the executing of Laws, and Discipline against Loose, and Scandalous Members; and I suppose it needs no Proof that we have Reason to make the same Request to them: But if they neglect it, we ought not to do so, but rather take so good an Admonition even from our Adversaries, if we have a real Love for the Church. For this will certainly be the most effectual Means to prove, that *G O D is in us of a Truth*; and if it do not convince, yet must certainly silence them. And this is an alteration so very much, and apparently for the better, that it were greatly to be desir'd, though there were not a Dissenter in the Nation.

III. The great Discouragement, that good Men meet with in this Excellent Work, *viz.* the

Paucity of them, who will lend an assisting Hand to the promoting of it, *Who will rise up with me, &c. and who will take my Part, &c.* A General Reformation can never be effected, except good Numbers of Men of Credit, and Ability in every part of the Kingdom, be willing to contribute their Assistance toward it, and that particularly in giving Information against Offenders, without which all Penal Laws whatsoever are but a meer dead Letter. 'Tis true, that the Law has provided those that should do this, *viz.* Constables in the Temporal Courts, Church-Wardens in the Spiritual; but 'tis a most melancholy Reflection, that they who are entrusted with this first Part of the Executive Power of our Laws, instead of doing their Duty to stop the Progress of Vice, do themselves too commonly add to the Publick Guilt, by wilful Breach of their Oaths, in forbearing to present the most Outrageous Immoralities. And so the whole Course of Justice against Vice, and Prophaneness is stopt, because they, who should be the first Springs of this Motion, do not perform their Office: And if they did, or others supplied their Place, and did it for them, yet in Cases, where the Law requires the Evidence of other Persons beside the Informer, 'tis to be feared that would be wanting. For to say all at once, There is not a Heart in the People of this Nation, whether of the Church, or Dissension, to do any thing of Moment for the Honour of Virtue, or the Suppression of Vice, and Immorality: So that at present this Holy War is at a stand for want of Men: Nor is it easy to say, how

how 'tis possible to raise them, till G O D does by some extraordinary Providence interpose, or till our Legislators can contrive some new Law to enforce the Execution of the old Ones; and all that can be done in the Interim is to shew,

IV. What are the true Reasons of Mens backwardness in this most necessary Business. I know indeed, that the common, and most specious Pretence against it is the odiousness of the Name of an Informer: But I hope to make it appear, that this is a meer Pretence, and a very thin one too, and that the true Causes of this Backwardness are,

1. Want of Zeal for GOD, and true Virtue.
 2. Neglect of the publick Interest, and an unreasonable thirst after private Lucre.
 3. The General Corruption of Mens Manners.
 4. Faction, or Zeal for a Party.
1. Want of Zeal for the Honour of G O D,
&c. That this is one great Cause of Mens backwardness in this Particular appears from this Consideration, *viz.* That they who will not Inform against a Man for Blasphemy, Prophaneness, or Debauchery, yet will for Robbing, or Stealing, especially from themselves; they that will not Inform against Profane Cursers and Swearers, for Conscience sake, yet will do it out of Pet, and Malice. If it were only an abhorrence of the Name of an Informer, this would make Men as averse from informing in one Case as in another. And if Men were animated with a true Zeal for G O D and Religion they wou'd inform against a Blasphemer, or Debauchee as soon as against a Thief, or a High-way-man;

For the one is altogether as hateful to GOD, and Good Men as the other. If Men were averse against informing purely out of Tenderness, and Good-nature, they would be more loath to inform against a High-way-man, than against a Debauchee: For the Punishment provided by the Law is very severe against the former, very light, and gentle against the other. And indeed it may prove a real Act of Mercy, and will, if it be not the Offender's own fault, to bring him to smart for his Lewdness: For by this means he may be reclaimed from those Evil Courses, which he hath taken, and which otherwise might bring him to a shameful End. For it has already been observed, that a Loose, and Debauch'd way of living is the Common Inlet to those Crimes for which Goals, and Gibbets were chiefly provided.

2. Another cause of this is a great neglect of the Publick Good, and unreasonable Thirst after private Lucre. Of this Temper we cannot but see very sad Symptoms and Effects, wherever we cast our Eyes, and they are no where more visible than in the Case before us. 'Twill be hard in some places to find a Man, that shall be willing to Prosecute him that has acted contrary to the Law, and the Publick Good, especially in the case of Immorality, which I have shewed to be as opposite to the good of the Nation, as any thing can be: But if you see one of these Men wrong'd or robb'd, tho' to a very small value, you shall find, that none of them are afraid to turn Informers, or to Prosecute them even with a Vengeance. If the Crime be not so gross as those of Blasphemy, or Debauchery, yet if the Law give a great *Præmium* to the Informers,

formers, there are never Men wanting, who will perform that Office: but there cannot be a greater demonstration of Private Interest's prevailing beyond the Publick, than in those Men, who seem to have a Sense of Religion, and a just Indignation against the Vices of the Age, and wonder that they should not be Punish'd: And yet these very Men, shall be as averse to perform the Office of Informers, as any others whatsoever. And if you'd know the reason, 'tis because they are afraid of lessening their Trade, losing their Custom, obstructing the Avenues of Gain, which they get by the Vices of their Neighbours.

3. A Third Course is, the General Corruptions of Mens Manners, of which this Backwardness in all Orders of Men to give Information is a very clear Proof. For certainly to inform against Vicious Livers can be thought odious by none, but those, who are in some measure guilty, and consequently nothing could bring the Name of an Informer against gross Immorality into general disgrace, but this *viz.* That the Contagion is almost Universal. If the great Majority of the Nation were truly reconciled to that Holy Religion, which they profess, and were fully apprized of the Fatal Effects of Sin, both as to this World, and the next, there can be no doubt, but that to bring all that are guilty of Profaneness to such Punishment, as their Sins deserve, or the Laws have provided, would be thought a most Reputable, and even a Meritorious Employ: And certainly it is so in it self, and one reason why Men would have it thought otherwise, is their own Guilt, and because *they hate to be reform'd.*

4. The last Occasion of Mens coldness, or aversion which I shall mention, is Faction, and Zeal for a Party. For

1. By this means it comes to pass that there is an Opposition betwixt those, who should unanimously agree to carry on this Excellent Work. He must too eagerly have espoused one side, who cannot see great Piety, and other good Qualities amongst those of the opposite Party: And we certainly want the assistance of all Hands to carry on so great a Work, and in which so much Opposition is to be expected. But Party-Names make Men, who are in the main of the same Principles stand at a distance, and as 'twere defiance with one another.

2. And when once Men are come to this Pass 'tis too natural for them, with a blind Zeal to oppose, and contradict whatever is done, or proposed by those of the Adverse-side; to consider not what is done, or said, but who does, or says it, and for that Reason only to dislike it. For they are transported by the Spirit of a Party, and can think nothing well done, nothing honest, or commendable, but what takes its first Rise from themselves, or their Leaders, and this is one Cause why so many pious Designs prove abortive, and nothing of moment can be done for the real service of Religion: And this is one Cause why the Number and Power of those who are hearty Friends to Virtue seems less than it really is, because they are divided on other accounts, and each Party would have every thing of this sort done in their own way, and are ready unseen to reject the Methods proposed by those, whom they look on, as their Adversaries.

3. Whilst

3. Whilst Men are thus drawing Sides, and facing, and endeavouring to outvye their Opposites in Number and Power, Men of the most profligate Principles and Practices take Shelter under one Party, or other, and find Protection, and Sanctuary for their Vices, as well as themselves, with them whose Cause they abet; and are supposed to make amends for their Crimes by a very great, and blazing Zeal for a Party.

4. Reformation is a Work, that wants the assistance of Men of the most active Spirits, and Absolute Minds. But when a Nation is divided, the Men, that are most fit for this Work, are employing their Vigor, and Resolution to quite other Purposes, and have little, or none left to spend against the most formidable Enemies, Vice, and Atheism.

I will only further observe upon this Head, that there is no more certain sign, that a Man has abandon'd himself to Faction, than to oppose the Execution of the Laws against Vice, and Immorality: For what is Faction, if to set one's self against the declared Will, and Pleasure of our most Gracious Sovereign, and the wholesome Laws of the Nation, be not? What can deserve so ill a Name, if to refuse to comply with the Proclamation of the Queen, and the Statutes of the Realm do not? And by what Figure is it, that we can call our selves Faithful Subjects, if we do professedly, or secretly oppose our Sovereign, and the whole Legillative Power, by discountenancing, or disapproving the Execution of some of their best, and most pious Laws? I will venture one step further, and be bold

bold to say, that it is the very Height, and last Degree of Faction, not only against our Queen, and Parliament, but against the King of Heaven. And in this Case if any, our Governours may say to them, as was of old said to the People of Israel : *Your Murmuring is not against us, but against the L O R D.* For certainly if Governours can be said to act by a Divine Authority in one Case more than another, it is when they do by temporal Penalties enforce Obedience to the plain, and acknowledged Laws of G O D himself.

Let all who desire to live in a steady Obedience to the Laws of G O D, and their Superiors, from hence learn to beware how they engage in a Faction, and be of any Party, but only for the best of Queens against all Usurpers and Invaders ; for the Protestant Succession against all Popish Pretenders ; for our Legal Monarchy against Tyranny on the one hand, and Republicanism, or Anarchy on the other ; for the Church establish'd against Popery, Novelty and Enthusiasm ; ~~and~~, not envying the Dissenters the Legal Liberty they enjoy, nor yet desiring that they should get the Dominion ; for C H R I S T J E S U S, and his most Holy Laws, against those Enemies of his, and ours, which we have renounced in our Baptism. And as many as are of this Mind Peace be upon them, and Mercy, and upon the Israel of God. And as Many as are not, May it please G O D to forgive them, and to turn their Hearts.

F I N I S.

